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No. 123.

WATERLOO

BY

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

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WATERLOO

BY

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WATERLOO.

Produced at The Prince's Theatre, Bristol, on September 21st, 1894, with the following cast, at the Lyceum Theatre, London, on May 4th, 1895.

Dramatis Personæ.

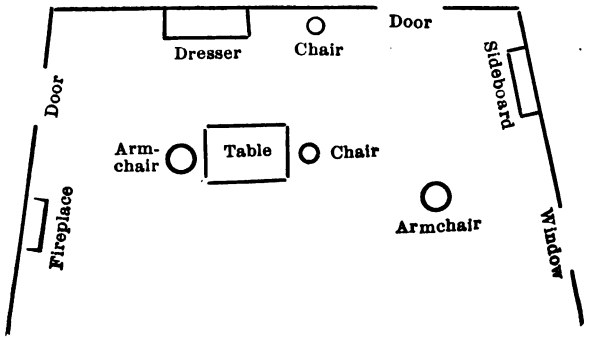
CORPORAL GREGORY BREWSTER (aged 76) "The Straggler"..... Mr. Henry Irving.

SERGEANT ARCHIE MCDONALD, R.A.. Mr. Fuller Mellish.

COLONEL JAMES MIDWINTER, Royal Scots Guards..... Mr. Haviland.

NORAH BREWSTER, the Corporal's grandniece..... Miss Annie Hughes.

Scene Plot.



WATERLOO.

SCENE.—*A front room in a small house in Woolwich. Cooking range at fire. Above the fire a rude painting of an impossible military man in a red coat with a bearskin. On one side a cutting from a newspaper framed. On the other a medal, also within a frame. Bright fire-irons, centre table, Bible on small table in window, wooden armchair with cushion, rack holding plates, etc.*

June, 1881.

[*Curtain rising discovers the empty room; door opens, and enter* NORAH BREWSTER, *a country girl, with a bundle of her effects. She looks timidly about her, and then closes the door.*

Basket on bandbox. During dialogue takes hat and cloak off and puts them on sideboard L., *takes apron out of basket, chair* R. *of door, and puts it on*).

NORAH. And this is Uncle Gregory's (*crosses to fireplace*). Why there's his portrait just above the fireplace, the very same as we have it at home—and there is his medal by his portrait. Oh, how strange that I should have a house all to myself. Why it's next door to being married. I suppose uncle isn't up yet, they said that he was never up before ten. Well thank goodness that housekeeper has lit the fire before she went away. She seems to have been a nice sort of a party, she does. Poor old uncle! he does seem to have been neglected. Never mind! I've come to look after him now. Let me see if everything is ready for uncle when he does come. Won't he be surprised

to see me. Of course he would have had mother's letter to say I was coming, but he wouldn't think I'd be here so early. (*At table* R. C.) I wonder what makes the milk look so blue. (*At drawer at back* R. C.) Oh my! what nasty butter. I'm so glad I brought some other butter with me. (*Takes pat of butter off plate puts it in basket, Takes pat out of basket, and puts it on plate*). Now for the bacon. Oh, what a cruel piece! Why, our Essex pigs would blush to own bacon like that! (*Puts rasher in frying-pan and puts pan on hob.*) Now I'll make the tea if the kettle boils. Kettle doesn't boil. Never mind, I'll warm the pot. (*Puts water out of kettle on fire in pot and pot on table*). Dear old uncle (*looking at portrait*), don't he look grand! They must have been awful brave folk to dare to fight against him. I do hope I'll be able to make him happy. (*Knock down in flat*, L. C.). Oh, dear! A knock! I wonder who it is! (*Knock again*). I suppose I must see who it is. (*Up to door in flat* R. C. *opens it*).

(*Enter* SERGEANT MCDONALD.)

SERGEANT. (*saluting*). Beg your pardon, Miss, but does Corporal Gregory Brewster live here?

NORAH. (*timidly*). Yes, sir.

SERGEANT. The same who was in the Scots Guards?

NORAH. Yes, sir.

SERGEANT. And fought in the battle of Waterloo?

NORAH. Yes, the same, sir.

SERGEANT. Could I have a word with him, Miss?

NORAH. He's not down yet.

SERGEANT. Ah, then, maybe I'd best look in on my way back. I'm going down to the butts, and will pass again in an hour or two.

NORAH. Very well, sir. (*Going out*). Who shall I say came for him? (SERGEANT *returns and places carbine* L. *of sideboard* L.)

SERGEANT. McDonald's my name—Sergeant McDonald of the Artillery. But you'll excuse my men-

tioning it, Miss: there was some talk down at the Gunners' barracks that the old gentleman was not looked after quite as well as he might be. But I can see now that it's only foolish talk, for what more could he want than this?

NORAH. Oh, I've only just come. We heard that his housekeeper was not very good to him, and that was why my father wished me to go and do what I could.

SERGEANT. Ah! he'll find the difference now.

NORAH (*bustling about putting tea in pot*). Two for uncle and one for the pot. We were all very proud of Uncle Gregory down Leyton way. (*Takes teapot to fire and fills it from kettle*).

SERGEANT. Aye, he's been a fine man in his day. There's not many living now who can say that they fought against Napoleon Boneypart.

NORAH. Ah, see, there's his medal hung up by his portrait.

SERGEANT (*after her*). But what's that beside the medal.

NORAH (*standing on tiptoe, and craning her neck*). Oh, it is a piece of print, and all about uncle. (*Brings frame*).

SERGEANT. Aye, its a slip of an old paper. There's the date, August, 1815, writ in yellow ink on the corner.

NORAH (*takes down medal*). It's such small print.

SERGEANT (*front of table*). I'll read it to you.

NORAH. Thank ye, sir!

SERGEANT (*clears his throat impressively*). "A heroic deed." That's what's on the top. "On Tuesday an interesting ceremony was performed at the barracks of the third regiment of guards, when in the presence of the Prince Regent, a special medal was presented to Corporal Gregory Brewster——

NORAH (R. *of* SERGEANT.) That's him! That's uncle!

SERGEANT. "To Corporal Gregory Brewster of Captain Haldane's flank company, in recog—recogni-

tion of his valor in the recent great battle. It appears that on the ever memorable 18th of June, four companies of the third Guards and of the Coldstreams, held the important farmhouse of Hugymount at the right of the British position. At a critical period of the action these troops found themselves short of powder, and Corporal Brewster was dispatched to the rear to hasten up the reserve am—ammunition. The corporal returned with two tumbrils of the Nassau division, but he found that in his absence the how—howitzer fire of the French had ignited the hedge around the farm, and that the passage of the carts filled with powder had become almost an impossibility. The first tumbril exploded, blowing the driver to pieces, and his comrade, daunted by the sight, turned his horses; but Corporal Brewster, springing into his seat, hurled the man down, and urging the cart through the flames, succeeded in rejoining his comrades. Long may the heroic Brewster——

NORAH. Think of that, the heroic Brewster!

SERG. "Live to treasure the medal which he has so bravely won, and to look back with pride to the day when, in the presence of his comrades, he received this tribute to his valor from the hands of the first gentleman of the realm." (*Replaces the paper.*) Well, that is worth being proud of. (*Hands back frame, she puts it on mantel*).

NORAH. And we are proud of it, too.

SERG. Well, Miss, I'm due at the butts, or I would (*taking carbine*) stay to see the old gentleman now. (*Up to door.*)

NORAH (*following*). I don't think he can be long.

SERG. Well, he'll have turned out before I pass this way again, good day, Miss, and my respects to you, Miss.

(*Exit* SERGEANT MCDONALD, *door in flat* L. C.)

NORAH. (*looking through door after him*). Oh, isn't he a fine man! I never saw such a man as that down

Leyton way. And how kind he was! Think of him reading all that to me about uncle! (*Coming* L.) It was as much as to say that uncle won that battle. Well, I think the tea is made (*over to fire*) now, and—

CORPORAL (*without entering*). Mary, Mary,—I wants my rations.

NORAH (*aside*). Lord, 'a mercy!

(*Enter* CORPORAL GREGORY BREWSTER, *tottering in, gaunt, bent, and doddering, with white hair and wizened face. He taps his way across the room, while* NORAH, *with her hands clasped, stares aghast first at the man, and then at his picture on the wall.*)

CORPORAL (*querulously*). I wants my rations! The cold nips me without 'em. See to my hands. (*Holds out his gnarled knuckles*).

NORAH (*gets round behind table*). Don't you know me, grand-uncle? I'm Norah Brewster, from down Essex way.

CORPORAL. Rum is warm, and schnapps is warm, and there's 'eat in soup, but gimme a dish of tea for chice. Eh? (*Peers at the girl.*) What did you say your name was, young woman? (*Sits* R. *of table.*)

NORAH (L. *of table*). Norah Brewster.

CORPORAL. You can speak out, lass. Seems to me folks' voices ain't as strong as they was.

NORAH (*back of chair*). I'm Norah Brewster, uncle. I'm your (*takes up bacon*) grand-niece, come from Essex way to live with you. (*Takes bacon out of pan on fire, puts on plate*).

CORPORAL (*chuckling*). You're Norah, hey? Then you'll be brother Jarge's gal, likely? Lor, to think o' little Jarge havin' a gal!

NORAH (*putting bacon on table*). Nay, uncle. My father was the son of your brother George. (*Pouring out tea*).

CORPORAL (*mumbles and chuckles, picking at his sleeves with his trembling hands*). Lor, but little Jarge

was a rare un! (*Draws up to the table while* NORAH *pours out the tea*). Eh, by Jimini, there was no chousing Jarge! He's got a bull-pup o' mine that I lent him when I took the shillin'. Likely it's dead now. He didn't give it ye to bring, may-be?

NORAH (R. *of table, and glancing ever wonderingly at her companion*). Why, grandpa Jarge has been dead this twenty years.

CORPORAL (*mumbling*). Eh, but it were a bootiful pup—bootiful! (*Drinks his tea with a loud supping.* NORAH *pours out second cup*). I am cold for the lack o' my rations. Rum is good and schnapps, but I'd as leaf have a dish o' tea as either.

NORAH. I've brought you some butter and some eggs in the basket. Mother said as I was to give you her respec's and love, and that she'd ha' sent a tin o' cream, but it might ha' turned on the way. (R. *Sets chair* L. *of fireplace.*)

CORPORAL (*still eating voraciously*). Eh, it's a middlin' goodish way. Likely the stage left yesterday.

NORAH. The what, uncle?

CORPORAL. The coach that brought ye.

NORAH. Nay, I came by the mornin' train.

CORPORAL. Lor' now, think o' that. The railway train, heh? You ain't afeard o' them new-fangled things! By Jimini! to think of your comin' by railway like that. Why, it's more than twenty mile. (*Chuckling*). What's the world a comin' to? (*Puffs out his chest and tries to square his shoulders*). Eh, but I get a power o' good from my rations!

NORAH. Indeed, uncle, you seem a deal stronger for them. (*Up to table and begins to clear things away.*)

CORPORAL. Aye, the food is like coals to that fire. But I'm nigh burned out, lass, I'm nigh burned out.

NORAH (*clearing the table*). You must ha' seen a deal o' life, uncle. It must seem a long long time to you.

CORPORAL. Not so very long, neither. I'm going on to ninety, but it might ha' been yesterday that I took the bounty. And that battle, why, by Jimini, I've not got the smell of the burned powder out o' my nose yet. Have you read that? (*Nodding to the cutting*).

NORAH. Yes, uncle, and I'm sure that you must be very proud of it.

CORPORAL (*stands looking at him*). Ah, it was a great day for me—a great day! The Regent he was there, and a fine body of a man too. (*Tries to stuff some tobacco into his pipe*). He up to me and he says, "The ridgement is proud of ye," says he. "And I'm proud o' the ridgement," says I. "And a damned good answer, too," says he to Lord Hill, and they both bust out a laughin'. (*Coughs and chuckles, and points up at the mantelpiece*).

NORAH. What can I hand you, uncle? (*Gets bottle and spoon from mantelpiece.*)

CORPORAL. A spoonful from that bottle by the brass candlestick, my girl! (*Drinks it.*) It's paregoric, (*music*) and rare stuff to cut the phlegm. (NORAH *looks out of the window.*) But what be you a peepin' out o' the window for? (NORAH *pushes window up, music louder.*)

NORAH (*excitedly*). Oh, uncle, here's a regiment o' soldiers comin' down the street.

CORPORAL (*rising and clawing his way towards the window*). A ridgement! Heh! Where be my glasses? Lordy, I can hear the band as plain as plain. Bands don't seem to play as loud now-a-days though as they used. (*Gets to the window.*) Here they come, pioneers, drum-major, band! What be their number, lass? (*His eyes shine, and his feet and stick tap to the music.*)

NORAH. They don't seem to have no number, uncle. They've something wrote on their shoulders. Oxfordshire, I think it be.

CORPORAL. Ah, yes. I heard as they had dropped the numbers, and given them new-fangled names.

(*shakes his head*). That wouldn't ha' done for the Dook. The Dook would ha' had a word there. (*band up to ff*). There they go, by Jimini! They're young, but they hain't forgot how to march. Blessed if I can see the light bobs though! (*band dim. to pp*). Well, they've got the swing, aye, they have the swing (*gazes after them until the last files have disappeared*).

NORAH (*helping him*). Come back to your chair, uncle.

CORPORAL. Where be that bottle again. It cuts the phlegm. It's the toobes that's wrong with me. Joyce says so, and he is a clever man. I'm in his club. There's the card, paid up, under yon flat iron. (*band stops*) (*suddenly slapping his thigh*). Why, darn my skin, I knew as something was amiss.

NORAH. Where, uncle.

CORPORAL. In them soldiers. I've got it now. They'd forgot their stocks. Not one o' them had his stock on (*chuckles and croaks*). It wouldn't ha' done for the Dook. No, by Jimini, the Dook would ha' had a word there. (*Door opens and* SERGEANT *appears beckoning comrade.*)

NORAH (*peeping towards the door*). Why, uncle, this is the soldier who came this morning—one of them with the blue coats and gold braid.

CORPORAL. Eh, and what do he want? Don't stand and stare, lass, but go to the door and ask him what he wants.

(*She approaches the door, which is half open.* SERGEANT MCDONALD *of Artillery, his carbine in his hand, steps over the threshold and salutes.*)

SERGEANT. Good day again to you, miss. Is the old gentleman to be seen now?

NORAH. Yes, sir. That's him. I'm sure he'll be very glad to see you. Uncle, here is a gentleman who wants to speak with you.

SERGEANT. Proud to see you, sir—proud and glad, sir!

(*Steps forward, grounds his carbine and salutes*—NORAH, *half frightened half attracted, keeps her eyes on the visitor.*)

CORPORAL (*blinking at the* SERGEANT). Sit ye down, sergeant, sit ye down! (*Shakes his head*). You are full young for the stripes. Lordy, it's easier to get three now, than one in my day. Gunners were old soldiers then, and the grey hairs came quicker than the three stripes.

(SERGEANT *puts carbine by window*, NORAH *takes off apron, folds it up, puts it in basket.*)

SERGEANT. I am eight years' service, sir. McDonald is my name, Sergeant McDonald of H. Battery, Southern Artillery Division. I have called as the spokesman of my mates to say that we are proud to have you in the town, sir.

(NORAH *finishes clearing table, table cloth folded in drawer of dresser.*)

CORPORAL (*chuckling and rubbing his hands*). That was what the Regent said. "The ridgement is proud of you," says he. "And I am proud of the ridgement," says I. "A damned good answer, too," says he, and he and Lord Hill bust out a-laughin'.

SERGEANT. The non-commissioned mess would be proud and honoured to see you, sir. If you could step as far you will always find a pipe o' baccy and a glass of grog awaitin' you.

CORPORAL. (*laughing until he coughs*). Like to see me, would they, the dogs! Well, well, if this warm weather holds I'll drop in—it's likely that I'll drop in. My toobes is bad to-day, and I feel queer here (*slapping his chest*). But you will see me one of these days at the barracks.

SERGEANT. Mind you ask for the non-com. mess.

CORPORAL. Eh?

SERGEANT. The non-com. mess.

CORPORAL. Oh, lordy! Got a mess of your own, heh, just the same as the officers. Too grand for a canteen now. It wouldn't have done for the Dook. The Dook would have had a word there.

SERGEANT (*respectfully*). You was in the Guards, sir, wasn't you?

CORPORAL. Yes, I am a guardsman, I am. Served in the 3rd Guards, the same they call now the Scots Guards. Lordy, sergeant, but they have all marched away, from Colonel Byng right down to the drummer boys, and hear am I, a straggler—that's what I call myself, a straggler. But it ain't my fault neither, for I've never had my call, and I can't leave my post without it.

SERGEANT (*shaking his head*). Ah, well, we all have to muster up there. Won't you try my baccy, sir? (*Hands over pouch.*)

CORPORAL. Eh?

SERGEANT. Try my baccy, sir?

(CORPORAL BREWSTER *tries to fill his clay pipe, but drops it. It breaks, and he bursts into tears with the long helpless sobs of a child.*)

CORPORAL. I've broke my pipe! my pipe!

NORAH (*running to him and soothing him*). Don't uncle, oh don't! We can easy get another.

SERGEANT. Don't you fret yourself, sir, if you—you'll do me the honour to accept it. 'Ere's a wooden pipe with an amber mouth.

CORPORAL (*his smiles instantly bursting through his tears*, SERGEANT *gets carbine*). Jimini! It's a fine pipe! See to my new pipe, gal! I lay that Jarge never had a pipe like this. Eh, and an amber mouth, too! (*Mumbles with it in his mouth.*) You've got your firelock there, sergeant.

SERGEANT. Yes, sir, I was on my way back from the butts when I looked in.

CORPORAL. Let me have the feel of it!

SERGEANT. Certainly. (*gives carb.*) Lordy, but it seems like old times to have one's hand on a musket. What's the manual, sergeant? Eh? Cock your firelock! Present your firelock! Look to your priming! Heh, sergeant! (*The breech on being pressed flies open.* NORAH *is now top of table looking on*). Oh, Jimini! I've broke your musket in halves.

SERGEANT (*laughing*). That's all right, sir! You pressed on the lever and opened the breech-piece. That's where we load 'em, you know.

CORPORAL. Load 'em at the wrong end! Well, well, to think of it! and no ramrod neither. I've heard tell of it, but I never believed it afore. Ah! it won't come up to Brown Bess. When there's work to be done you mark my words, and see if they don't come back to Brown Bess.

SERGEANT (*rising*). But I've wearied you enough for one sitting. I'll look in again, and I'll bring a comrade or two with me, if I may, for there isn't one but would be proud to have speech with you. (*Salutes. Exit.*) My very best respects to you, Miss.

NORAH. Oh, Uncle, isn't he noble and fine? (*Up to door, looks after him.*)

CORPORAL (*mumbling*). Too young for the stripes, gal. A sergeant of gunners should be a growed man. I don't know what we are comin' to in these days. (*Chuckling.*) But he gave me a pipe, Norah! A fine pipe with an amber mouth. I'll lay that brother Jarge never had a pipe like that.

NORAH (*aside nodding towards the door*). To think that he will be like Uncle in sixty years, and that Uncle was once like him. (*Forward to window* L.) He seems a very kind young man, I think. He calls me "Miss" and Uncle "sir," so polite and proper. I never saw as nice a man down Essex way.

CORPORAL. What are you moonin' abont, gal! I

want you to help me move my chair to the door, or maybe yon fancy chair will do. It's warm, and the air would hearten me if I can keep back the flies. They get owdacious in this weather and they plague me cruel.

NORAH. The flies, Uncle.

(*He moves feebly across to where the sunshine comes in at the door, and he sits in it.* NORAH *helps him.*)

CORPORAL. Eh, but it's fine! It always makes me think of the glory to come. Was it to-day that parson was here?

NORAH. No, Uncle. (*Kneels on his* L.)

CORPORAL. Then it was yesterday. I get the days kind o' mixed. He reads to me, the parson does.

NORAH. But I could do that, Uncle.

CORPORAL. You can read too, can you? By Jimini, I never seed such a gal. You can travel by railroad and you can read. Whatever is the world comin' to? It's the Bible he reads to me. (NORAH *runs, gets Bible, and kneels again.*)

NORAH (*opening the Bible*). What part would you like to hear?

CORPORAL. Eh? (NORAH *repeats.*)

CORPORAL, Oh, them wars.

NORAH. The wars!

CORPORAL. Aye, keep to the wars; "Give me the Old Testament, parson," says I, "there's more taste to it," says I. Parson, he wants to get off to something else, but it's Joshua or nothing with me. Them Israelites was good soldiers, good growed soldiers, all of 'em.

NORAH. But, Uncle, it's all peace in the next world.

CORPORAL. No, it ain't, gal.

NORAH. Oh, yes, Uncle, surely.

CORPORAL (*irritably knocking his stick on the ground*). I tell ye it ain't, gal. I asked parson.

NORAH. Well, what did he say?

CORPORAL. He said there was to be a last final fight.

NORAH. 'Fight?

CORPORAL. Why, he even gave it a name, he did. The battle of Arm—Arm—The battle of Arm—

NORAH. Armageddon.

CORPORAL. Aye, that was the name. (*Pauses thoughtfully.*) I 'spec's the 3rd Guards will be there. And the Dook—the Dook'll have a word to say. (*Sinks back a little in his chair.* NORAH *shuts window, puts Bible back.*)

NORAH. What is it, Uncle? You look tired.

CORPORAL (*faintly*). Maybe I have had air enough. And I ain't strong enough to fight agin the flies.

NORAH. Oh, but I will keep them off, Uncle.

CORPORAL. They get owdacious in this weather. I'll get back to the corner. But you'll need to help me with the chair. (*Knock.*) Chairs are made heavier than they used to be.

(*Is in the act of rising when there comes a tap at the door, and* COLONEL MIDWINTER (*civilian costume*) *puts in his head.*)

COLONEL. Is this Gregory Brewster's?

CORPORAL. Yes, sir. That's my name.

COLONEL. Then you are the man I came to see.

CORPORAL. Who was that, sir?

COLONEL. Gregory Brewster was his name.

CORPORAL. I am the man, sir

COLONEL. And you are the same Brewster, as I understand, whose name is on the roll of the Scots Guards as having been present at the battle of Waterloo?

CORPORAL. The same Brewster, sir, though they used to call it the 3rd Guards in my day. It was a fine ridgement, sir, and they only want me now to make up a full muster.

COLONEL (*cheeriiy*). Tut! tut! they'll have to

wait years for that. But I thought I should like to have a word with you, for I am the Colonel of the Scots Guards.

(CORPORAL *springing to his feet and saluting, staggers about to fall. The* COLONEL *and* NORAH *prevent it.* NORAH *on his* L.)

COLONEL. Steady, steady. (*leads* BREWSTER *to other chair.*) Easy and steady . . .

CORPORAL (*sitting down and panting*). Thank ye, sir. I was near gone that time. But, Lordy, why I can scarce believe it. To think of me a corporal of the flank company, and you the colonel of the battalion! Lordy, how things do come round to be sure.

(NORAH *helps him into chair* R. *of table.* COLONEL *gets by fireplace*).

CORPORAL. That's what the Regent said. "The regiment is proud of ye," says he. "And I'm proud of the regiment," says I——

COLONEL. And so you are actually he.

CORPORAL. "And a damned good answer, too," says he.

COLONEL. Why, we are very proud of you in London. And so you are actually one of the men who held Hougoumont. (*Looks round him at the medicine bottles, etc.*)

(NORAH *sits* L. *of table with needlework, taken from her basket.*)

CORPORAL. Yes, colonel, I was at Hougoumont.

COLONEL. Well, I hope that you are pretty comfortable and happy.

CORPORAL. Thank ye, sir, I am pretty bobbish when the weather holds, and the flies are not too owdacious. I have a good deal of trouble with my

toobes. You wouldn't think the job it is to cut the phlegm. And I need my rations, I get cold without 'em. And my jints, they are not what they used to be.

COLONEL. How's the memory?

CORPORAL. Oh, there ain't anything amiss there. Why, sir, I could give you the name of every man in Captain Haldane's flank company.

COLONEL. And the battle—you remember that?

CORPORAL. Why I sees it afore me, every time I shuts my eyes. Lordy, sir, you wouldn't hardly believe how clear it is to me. There's our line right along from the paragoric bottle to the inhaler, d'ye see! Well then, the pill box is for Hougoumont on the right, where we was, and the thimble for Le Hay Saint. That's all right, sir. (*Cocks his head and looks at it with satisfaction.*) And here are the reserves, and here were our guns and our Belgians, then here's the French, where I put my new pipe, and over here, where the cough drops are, was the Proosians a comin' up on our left flank, Jimini, but it was a glad sight to see the smoke of their guns. (NORAH *helps him into chair.*)

COLONEL. And what was it that struck you most, now, in connection with the whole affair?

CORPORAL. I lost three half-crowns over it, I did. I shouldn't wonder if I were never to get the money now. I lent them to Jabez Smith, my rear rank man at Brussels. "Grig!" says he, "I'll pay you true, only wait till pay-day." By Jimini, he was struck by a lancer at Quarter Brass, and me without a line to prove the debt. Them three half-crowns is as good as lost to me.

COLONEL (*laughing*). The officers—of the Guards—want you to buy—yourself—some little trifle, some little present which may add to your comfort. It is not from me, so you need not thank me. (*Slips a note into the old man's baccy pouch. Crosses to leave.*)

CORPORAL. Thank you kindly, sir. But there's one favor I'd ask you, Colonel.

COLONEL. Yes, corporal, what is it?

CORPORAL. If I'm called, Colonel, you won't grudge me a flag and a firing party. I'm not a civilian, I'm a Guardsman, and I should like to think as two lines of the bear-skins would be walkin' after my coffin.

COLONEL. All right, corporal, I'll see to it. (CORPORAL *sinks back in his chair.*) I fear that I have tired him. He is asleep, I think. Good-bye, my girl; and I hope that we may have nothing but good news from you. (*Exit* COLONEL.)

NORAH. Thank you, sir, I'm sure I hope so too. Uncle, uncle! Yes, I suppose he is asleep. But he is so grey and thin, that he frightens me. Oh, I wish I had someone to advise me, for I don't know when he is ill and when he is not.

(*Enter* SERGEANT MCDONALD *abruptly.*)

SERGEANT. Good day, Miss. How is the old gentleman?

NORAH. Sh! He's asleep, I think. But I feel quite frightened about him.

SERGEANT (*going over to him*). Yes, he don't look as if he were long for this life, do he? Maybe a sleep like this brings strength to him.

NORAH. Oh, I do hope so.

SERGEANT. I'll tell you why I came back so quick. I told them up at the barracks that I'd given him a pipe, and the others they wanted to be in it too, so they passed round, you understand, and made up a pound of baccy. It's long cavendish, with plenty o' bite to it.

NORAH. How kind of you to think of him!

SERGEANT. Do you always live with him?

NORAH. No, I only came this morning.

SERGEANT. Well, you haven't taken long to get straight.

NORAH. Oh, but I found everything in such a mess. When I have time to myself I'll soon get it nice.

SERGEANT. That sounds like marching orders to me.

NORAH. Oh, how could you think so!

SERGEANT. Tell me, Miss, have you ever been over a barrack?

NORAH. No, I've been on a farm all my life.

SERGEANT. Well, maybe, when he comes up you would come with him? I'd like to show you over.

NORAH. I'm sure I'd like to come.

SERGEANT. Well, will you promise to come?

NORAH (*laughing*). You seem quite earnest about it.

SERGEANT. Well, maybe I am.

NORAH. Very well, I'll promise to come.

SERGEANT. You'll find us rough and ready.

NORAH. I'm sure it will be very nice.

SERGEANT. Not quite what young ladies are accustomed to.

NORAH. But I am no young lady. I've worked with my hands every day that I can remember.

CORPORAL (*in a loud voice*). The Guards need powder. (*Louder.*) The Guards need powder! (*Struggles to rise.*)

NORAH. Oh, I am so frightened.

CORPORAL (*staggering to his feet, and suddenly flashing out into his old soldiery figure.*) The Guards need powder, and, by God, they shall have it! (*Falls back into chair.* NORAH *and the* SERGEANT *rush towards him.*)

NORAH (*sobbing*). Oh, tell me, sir, tell me, what do you think of him.

SEREGEANT (*gravely*). I think that the 3rd Guards have a full muster now.

CURTAIN. SLOW.

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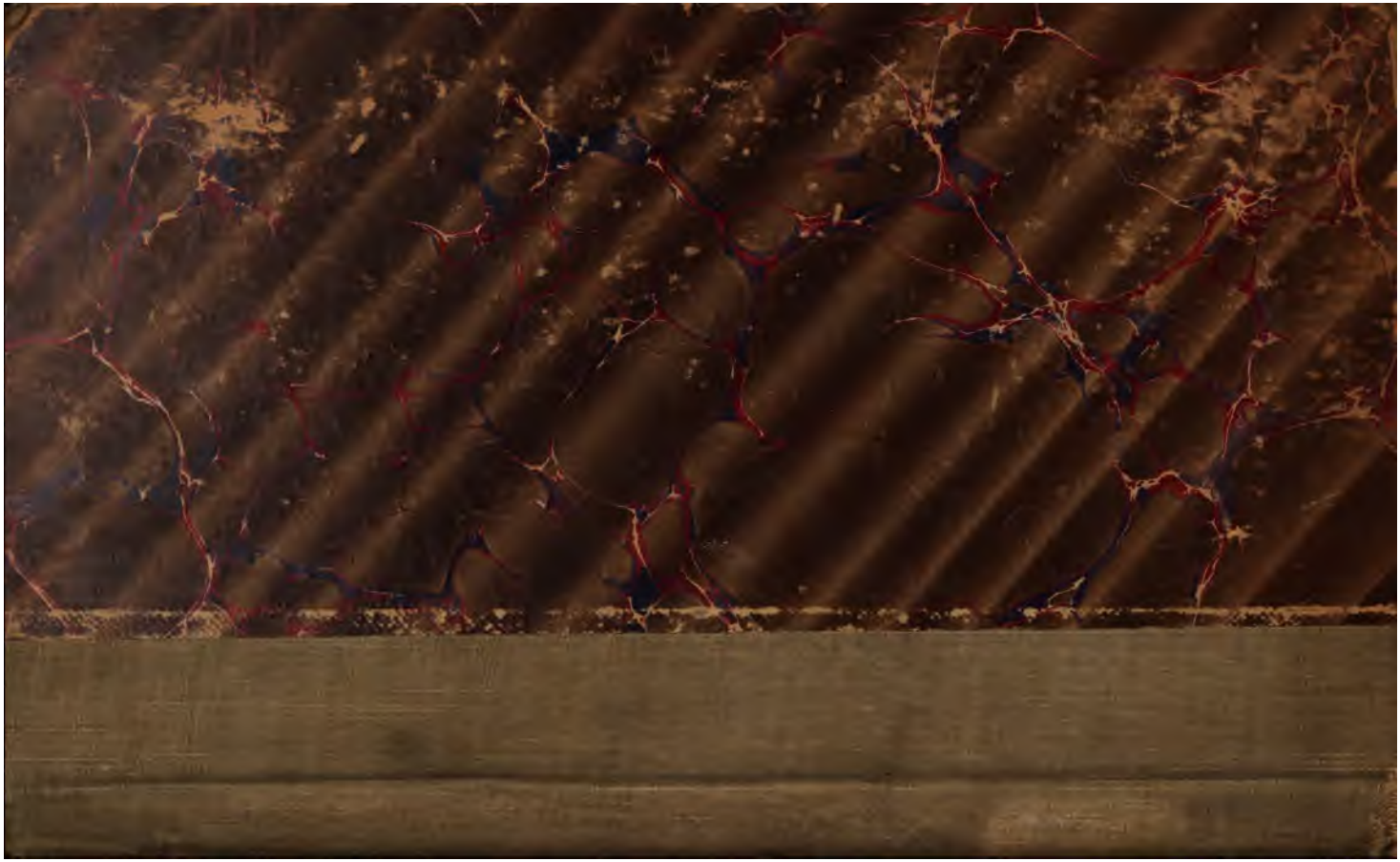
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